

AN
APOLOGY FOR SLAVERY.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

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AN
APOLOGY FOR SLAVERY;

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OR,

SIX COGENT ARGUMENTS

AGAINST

THE IMMEDIATE ABOLITION OF THE
SLAVE-TRADE.

FRONTI NULLA FIDES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD; AND
R. FAULDER, BOND-STREET.

1792.

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APPOLOGY FOR SLAVERY

SIX COLORED ARGUMENTS



LONDON
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAULS CHURCH-YARD, AND
S. BARNARD, LONDON

1794

T O

COLONEL TARLETON.

S I R,

I T has been your chance, or your choice, to defend, more than once, the Rights of Great Britain against those who wished to shake off her gentle yoke. Formerly you did your best endeavours, as a foldier, to retain the rebellious Americans in dutiful obedience: and now you are exerting your abilities, as an orator, to preserve our Slaves from emancipation. — To whom, then, with greater propriety can I inscribe the following sheets? — May they tend to put the merits of your cause in their true light; and convey to posterity a testimony of the esteem in which you are held by, &c.

THE AUTHOR.

COLONEL TARKENTON

1718

It has been your chance, of your choice
to defend, more than once, the Rights
of your Country, and that with success
has on her side the People, I trust, and
the best of Governments, as a Reward, to
retain the noblest of Arms, and in doing
of others; and now you are returning
again, as an Officer, to preserve our State
from Invasion. -- To whom, then,
will you give the Reward, and I include the
following, that I may be able to put
the names of your cause in their eyesight,
and convey to posterity a testimony of the
claim to which you are held by God.

THE AUTHOR.

A N

APOLOGY FOR SLAVERY.

In this curious and inquisitive generation, when the most venerable and hoary prejudices seem to flee, with precipitancy, before that blazing meteor, called *The Rights of Man*; some rash and inconsiderate assertors of those rights have gone so far as to maintain, that the vile and barbarous *Blacks* of Africa have an equal claim to freedom with the rest of the human race; and that we cannot, even indirectly, be accessary to the depriving them of that freedom, without disregarding the piteous cries of *Nature*, *Humanity*, and *Religion*; which are all vitally wounded (say they) by our enslaving our fellow creatures, or by conniving at that nefarious practice.

I have often, before now, observed, that vague and general imputations are generally overcharged; and have, therefore, less effect on the minds of those who think, than specific positive accusations:

but the imputation in question has been so often urged and repeated with so much earnestness, energy and eloquence; that the world, I find, begins to listen to it with wonderful attention; and many weak souls seem, at length, disposed to believe it to be well grounded. The professed defenders of *Slavery* have been, comparatively, so few and so feeble, that their numerous and potent adversaries have often obtained over them an easy triumph: so that, for some time past, I have not heard of a single pen, of any force, having been brandished on that side of the question.

Yet the cause, I apprehend, is far from being desperate. It only wants a proper and persevering champion: and to shew how easily, and, I trust, how successfully it may be defended; I, who am but a puny man, and no Quixotist, will venture to undertake its defence.

The enemies of *Slavery* are, indeed, a formidable phalanx, and most expert in the use of every weapon that can be used in this sort of warfare. Greek and Latin, French and English, Philosophy and Oratory, Prose and Verse, have all been alternately and successively employed to prepossess the unwary *Vulgar* against the Orthodox doctrine for which I combat. But I am not, in the least, dismayed: with *truth* and *stubborn* facts on my side, I fear not a legion of foes. Some gigantic Go-
liath

liath may, haply, step forth to defy me; and may even curse me in the name of his Gods: but I flatter myself, that I have in my scrip a few hard pebbles, which, to use a common phrase, will do his business, if my trusty sling but serve me sufficiently on this occasion.

As, above all things, I love method, I will go to work as methodically as possible; and, as honest *Poliniere* was wont to say, “begin by the beginning, and end by the end:” a rule which too many modern writers seem greatly to neglect; for they often begin where they should end, and end where they should begin.

First of all then, as my opponents are continually affirming, that Slavery and the slave-trade are a manifest and cruel insult to *Nature*, whom they represent as a Matron of exquisite tender feelings, weeping and wailing over the misery of our *Negroes* as Rachel is said to have done over the murdered Innocents of Bethlehem; it becomes necessary to enquire, what sort of a being this same *Nature* is, and through what channel her voice of lamentation has reached the ears of those good gentlemen.

Indeed, from the manner in which some of them talk and write, one would think they had discovered the recess of the old Lady, and found her tearing her hair, and beating her breast, and rending

ing her garments, on account of the fable sons and daughters of Africa. One writer, in particular, a member of the Jacobine Club, has portrayed her in the form of a naked Eve, weeping, not over a captured slave, but over a dead fawn; and crying out her poor eyes at the flagitiousness of men—for eating animal food!—I will take upon me to say, that they never detected her in this, or any such like attitude; nor ever saw her at all, but in their own wild imaginations.

We may fairly say of Nature, what an apostle says of God: *No one hath ever seen Her* *. We can form no idea of her, but from her visible operations; and surely these give us little room to think, that she is either tear-eyed, or tender-hearted. She sometimes indeed shews symptoms of benevolence; but it is the stern benevolence of an indifferent step-dame, rather than the fond caresses of a partial mother. In truth, she seems to be a very whimsical capricious Madam, whose blandishments and bastings follow one another so speedily and unexpectedly, that we are totally at a loss to know, when she is in jest, or earnest. This, however, we know full well: when she happens to be in her sulky humours, which is very often, she kicks without mercy, and without the smallest appearance of feeling.

* ΘΕΟΥ ΟΥΔΕΙΣ ΠΩΠΟΤΕ ΤΕΙΔΕΝΤΑΙ. John i. 28.

When, heaving the furies of the sea, she plunges whole navies into the Deep—When, shaking the solid earth, she buries whole cities in their own ruins—When, opening her dreadful Volcanos, she overwhelms the adjacent towns and villages with liquid fire—When her lightning issues from the cloud, and blasts whatever it touches—When her rivers inundate the plains, and sweep away, in the course of a minute, the fruits of a whole year's labour; or her mildews, in a single morning, destroy all the husbandman's hopes—Are these marks of maternal affection? Are these proofs of a sympathetic disposition?

Nor is it only in her unanimate reign that she shews her cruel power. Is it not She that inspires the lion and the tyger to tear in pieces and devour their prey? Is it not She that excites the eagle to trust the innocent lamb, and the kite to dart upon the harmless dove? Is it not She that makes the blood-thirsty beagle pursue the timid hare, and the wily spider entrap the unwary fly? Is it not She who bids the wolf ravage our fields, the fox steal our poultry, the locusts eat up our herbs, the rats and mice our grain; and the shark swallow—even ourselves? Is it not She who is daily tormenting us with head-achs, tooth-achs, heart-achs, gouts, gravels, rheumatisms, palsies, dropsies, epilepsies; and the whole catalogue of
bodily

bodily evils that consume our brittle frame?—Yet this is the Being who is said to cry, forsooth, for the savage Negroes, because we force them to work for their own and our bread!—Let us hear no more of slave-making being a disregard to the cries of *Nature*;—but let us next examine how far it is a disregard to the cries of *Humanity*.

And, here again, I would ask the enemies to Slavery, if ever they have seen *Humanity*, or heard her pretended cries? For my part, I freely confess, or, to speak more fashionably, *I am free to confess*, that I can form no abstract idea of *Humanity*, any more than of *Nature*; and must therefore mentally depicture her as I do *Nature*, from her general influence and its effects; or as She appears in the whole aggregate of the human kind.

Now what appearance does she there put on? That of an unfeeling, cruel, and blood-thirsty Medæa, murdering her own children without remorse; or, which is the same thing, permitting them to murder one another, without regret.—Adam has yet but two sons, when the elder envies, hates, and assassinate the younger. Is she seen to drop a tear on this occasion? We read, I grant, that the voice of Abel's blood cried to heaven from the ground on which it was shed; but there is not a word of the cries of *Humanity*.

Was

Was she heard to cry when "the sons of the gods (that is, the great ones of the earth) violated at pleasure the daughters of men," and replenished the earth with such "violence," as drew down the vengeance of heaven upon almost the whole race?—Was she heard to cry, when the Sodomites had got to such a pitch of injustice, that even the sacred rules of hospitality could not save the innocent traveller from their horrid assaults? It is true a voice was then also heard, that reached the throne of God: but it was the crying voice of iniquity, not of Humanity.—Was she heard to cry when the robber Joshua, as the Phenicians called him, butchered the Canaanites, without distinction of sex or age, in order to take possession of their property without reserve?—Was she heard to cry, when an insolent tyrant slew, at one time, fourscore harmless priests, for having done what they deemed a just and loyal action?—Was she heard to cry, when the virtuous Naboth was stoned to death by the command of an imperious Queen?—Was she heard to cry, when, at the desire of a bloody usurper, the heads of seventy regal youths were sent to him in baskets, as a pledge of allegiance?—Was she heard to cry, when the illustrious deputy of the most *illustrious* Antiochus* ordered seven brothers to be

* Surnamed *Epiphanes*.

tortured,

tortured, mangled, and broiled, under the eyes of their own mother, because they refused to eat hog's flesh, against their paternal laws?—Was she heard to cry, when the price of a wanton dance was the head of the greatest of the *mere* sons of women?—Was she heard to cry, even at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; when the earth quaked, the rocks rent, and the very graves of the dead were opened?—Is there, in any of these instances, which are all taken from a book universally known, and by many yet held sacred, the smallest appearance of *Humanity* lamenting over human misery?

Nor is profane history less fertile in examples. Revolve the annals of all ages, and point out, if you can, a period, when *Humanity* was seen or heard to weep at the most oppressive tyranny? Nay, it should seem, as if she rejoiced: for, once more, how are her sentiments to be known but by the general voice of mankind? Now is it not certain that the general voice of mankind has ever blazoned the names of the greatest tyrants, as the greatest and most glorious of men: from the *great* Sesostris of Egypt to the *great* Frederic of Prussia? The wider their conquests, the wider was their fame; the more blood they shed, the greater heroes they were deemed; and the more people they enslaved, the higher was their rank

in

in scale of honour.—Was there ever a greater conquerer, blood-spiller, and slave-maker, than Alexander of Macedon? Yet the voice of Humanity raised him to a God! Was there ever a greater usurper on human rights than Cæsar of Rome? Yet the voice of humanity placed him among the stars!—Yet this same Humanity is made to shake and shudder, and moan and groan, because some thousands of pitiful *Blacks*, purchased with our own money, or pilfered by our address, are detained in Slavery, and flogged into subordination!—I am almost ashamed to have dwelt so long on this silly argument. Remains to be examined, how far the cries of *Religion* have been heard, are heard, or ought to be heard, on the subject in question.

And here, indeed, I am obliged to own, that a Being, called RELIGION, seems actually to have, once at least, exerted her voice in favour of universal freedom; and exerted it in so benign, gentle, and enchanting a manner, that, if the exertion had long continued, I fear that *Nature* and *Humanity* would have lost their influence with respect to man. Her voice was heard through the organ of JESUS, in so audible, distinct, and unequivocal a manner, as not to be misunderstood. By HIS mouth she tells us, that, in point of liberty, she admits of no distinctions. Jew and Gentile,

tile, Greek and Barbarian, the circumcised and uncircumcised, are there equally free. All men are our neighbours, our brethren; whom she willeth us to love as ourselves. The rule of our conduct towards others must, according to her, be that which we wish them to hold towards us. Cruelty, rapine, cozenage, and every sort of oppression, for ever exclude from HER kingdom.

That such a *Religion* should weep over the misery of our Negroes, I am willing to believe. Her great HIGH-PRIEST most certainly did weep, in her name, over less misery than theirs. He blended his tears with those of two affectionate sisters, who had lost their brother by fair death; and even raised him from the dead to remove their cause of tears. He wept over the future miseries of Jerusalem, when its inhabitants were plotting his destruction! Such a Religion, I say, once existed, and may possibly still exist in *Eutopia* or in *Heaven*: but who, for these fifteen hundred years, has seen her, or heard her crying, through compassion, on this sublunary globe?—Her *Name-sake*, that assumed her place in the reign of Constantine, so far from weeping at human misery, has, ever since, been one of the principal causes of it. She has literally verified, what the Christian Legislator said of her predecessor, in a metaphorical sense: she has set the son against the father,

thief, and the father against the son, and put a sword in the hand of one brother, to stab another. —Not to mention *Pagans, Jews, or Mohammedans*; let the sect of *Christians* be pointed out, in which she has not abetted every species of intolerantism. Who, but she, prompted the Athanasians to calumniate and maltreat the Arians; and these to retaliate on the Athanasians? Who, but she, excited the Donatist and Vandalic persecutions? Who, but she, sowed the seeds of dissention between the Greek and Latin churches; and made a breach of communion, that is never likely to be healed? Who, but she, authorized Charlemagne to butcher in cold blood four thousand Saxons, and to dragoon as many more of them into the Faith? Who, but she, made an ambitious Pope * sacrifice his conscience to a cruel Usurper †, for the vain title of *Universal Bishop*? Who, but she, inspired his successors in the See of Rome, to attempt and accomplish the spiritual subjugation of the western world to their assumed authority? Who, but she, emboldened Gregory VII. to seize also the sword of civil power, and to consider kings and emperors as his vassals and slaves? Who, but she, inspired even the fathers of a general synod to vote ‡ the burning of John Huls and Jerome of

* Boniface III.

† Phocas.

‡ *Lata est sententia Patrum, cremendos esse Contumaces.* Eneas Sylv.

Prague, in spite of the safe-conduct of an emperor? Who, but she, was the MOTHER of the INQUISITION? And who but she, dictates an AUTO-DE-FE? Who, but she, in short, at once condemns the soul to hell, and the body to the flames?

Ghosts of the Albigenes, so cruelly butchered by the religious Montfort, authorized by a papal Bull! Ghosts of Vanini and Servetus, who fell, the one a victim to Papistic, the other to Calvinistic zeal! Ghosts of Papists and Protestants, whom our supreme head of the church, the godly Henry, burned at the same stake! Ghosts of Latimer and Ridley, whom not even the wish of a cardinal could rescue from the fangs and faggots of the orthodox Bonner! Ghost of the much-injured, amiable MARY, who fell a sacrifice, not barely to the jealousy of our *virgin queen*, but to the safety of our *infant church*!—Say, could I summon you from your seats of repose, to attest to the truth of what I have here advanced, would you not cry out with one voice—in the words of Lucretius, “Yes, yes! *tantum potuit suadere malorum Religio!*”

With what face, after this, can the sticklers for the abolition of Slavery introduce *Religion*, even in her present Christian garb, pleading with tears for liberty to a set of unchristened savages, to whom
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the name of CHRIST is only known through the blasphemies of their *Christian* task-masters? SHE, who makes no sort of scruple to enslave, persecute, and torture her own baptized children!—Mr. Wilberforce and his associates may be able to point out a few individual clergymen of every denomination, who have openly declared themselves the enemies of slavery; but their voice can never be called that of Religion, who speaks only by *established churches*. Until, then, the Church of England and the Kirk of Scotland (for the Church of Rome is here out of the question) have clearly delivered their oracles *ex cathedra*; and thundered anathemas against the Slave-trade; we must consider the genuine voice of Religion, such as she is in these latter days, as on our side of the question.

On the whole, I trust, I have fully proved, that the arguments derived by our adversaries, from the pretended cries of *Nature*, *Humanity*, and *Religion*, in favour of the abolition of Slavery, are futile and frivolous in the extreme. I proceed now to offer my reasons why Slavery ought not to be abolished.

These reasons, which I have elsewhere called my pebbles (drawn from the brook of Common Sense, and, I trust, not less smooth and solid than

those which little David aimed at the head of the Philistine), are in number *one* more than his:—for I set myself to prove that Slavery, and the Slave-trade, is agreeable to, and founded on,

1st, The *Laws of Nature*.

2dly, The *Law of Nations*.

3dly, The *Divine positive Law*.

4thly, The *Laws of Self-interest*.

5thly, The *Laws of Luxury*; and,

Lastly, The *Laws of State-expediency*.

I. *Slavery agreeable to the Laws of Nature.*

That man is born in Slavery, lives in Slavery, and dies in Slavery, is a truth too obvious to be seriously called in question.

At the very first period of his vital existence, he finds himself shut up in a lightless dungeon, whence the midwife, even with her *Habeas Corpus* (as my friend Malcolm M'Gregor wittily observes), cannot always rescue him, without danger to his little person.—No sooner is he relieved from this dismal situation, than he is violently ensheathed in swathings sufficient to bind
a Hercules,

a Hercules, or a Samson; and put under the command of a mercenary Female *Slave-driver*, who turns, tosses, and torments him, according to her pleasure or caprice.—From under this petticoat-government he is removed to school, where a new tyrant awaits him with rods and ferulas.—From school he goes to a seven-years apprenticeship, or into a seven-years College-ship; in neither of which, he will not affirm, that he is not more or less a Slave.—Has he ever yet tasted of the *Rights of Man*?

He now arrives at manhood; and gets quit of his master, or his tutors; but is he free? No; if he be poor he must work, in subordination, for a longer term than that of his apprenticeship; perhaps, for all his life: if he be rich and independent, he will soon become the slave of idleness, dissipation, vice, and all their concomitants. both will most probably be the slaves of Love, the most unmerciful of all tyrants. Ten to one, however, but they escape from his domination—to become the slaves of ambition; and, when ambition has lost its sway, they become the slaves of sordid avarice. There is, now, no hope of delivery; in their present fetters they will remain until tyrannic Death lay hold on them, and throw them breathless into a still more dismal prison than that from which they issued into life?

Such is the natural life of man: a continued series of successive slavery! nor let it be imagined that birth, rank, or riches, make any essential difference. There may be an accidental *plus* or *minus* in the *quotum* of servitude: but that depends not on any external advantage. The king may be a greater slave than the cobbler; the first peer of the realm than the meanest peasant; and Lord Lonsdale, with all his mines, than the poor author of this essay. A facetious Latin poet introduces a Stoic philosopher proving, that all men are, more or less, mad—

—————Huc propius me,
Dum doceo insanire omnes, vos ordine adite.

With much greater reason I may affirm, that all men are, more or less, slaves.

But, if a certain degree of Slavery be the necessary portion of mankind, why should the *Negroes*, who are scarcely *men*, be exempted from any degree of Slavery that they can bear?—If the European race, who reflect so strongly their Maker's image in the whiteness of their skin, the nobleness of their features, and the symmetry of their limbs;—in short, who are *little less* than angels, be, notwithstanding, doomed by Nature to live in a state of perpetual Slavery, with what decency can it be asserted, that the Africans, whose black complexion,

complexion, beast-like lineaments, and mis-shapen members demonstrate them to be *little more* than incarnate devils, are naturally entitled to the same degree of freedom with ourselves?—Strange, unaccountable assertion!

II. *Slavery agreeable to the Laws of Nations.*

This proposition is, likewise, so self-evident, that I may save myself the trouble of proving it.—Let any nation under the sun be named since the first establishment of nations to the establishment of the American democracy, in which Slavery was not authorized and supported by the laws of the state.—The wise and priest-led Egyptians, the learned Assyrians, the enlightened philosophical Greeks, the martial and political Romans—all sanctioned Slavery, and encouraged the Slave-trade. Some Christian emperors attempted its abolition; but in favour of whom? Of those only who should become Christians!—An attempt was also made, some years ago, by our own legislature; but in favour of whom? Of such Negroes only as should have the happiness to set their foot on British ground.—The Black Code of Jamaica, &c. was left untouched.—A still greater effort was made in the last French National Assembly; but with what success it is

known. So that, if the American States be excepted (and what influence should one dirty Republic have on the world), there is not a known nation at this day, which does not authorize and support some species or other of absolute Slavery. Even Poland cannot yet be fairly instanced as an example to the contrary*.

But, if Slavery in general has at all times been authorized by the Law of Nations, I may safely say, that the Africans have always been deemed the fairest game in this sort of man-hunting. A *Black* and a *Slave* have become synonymous terms; and *African Freedom* would be a solecism in language.

Slavery, then, and especially African Slavery, is founded on the Law of Nations: let us next see how far it is authorized by the Divine Law,

III. *Slavery authorized by the Divine positive Law.*

To those who have read the Holy Bible, to prove this will also seem an unnecessary task; and as Mr. Wilberforce is, I am persuaded, one of the number, he must be convinced that my proposition is unquestionable.—But, as many of the

* I just now learn that Slavery is either abolished, or about to be abolished, in Denmark; but I can scarcely believe it.

friends of Freedom may not, in this age of infidelity, have perused the sacred volume, I will for their conviction adduce a few proofs from it, that must overcome the most obstinate scepticism.

I shall not step back into the Antediluvian world; we know too little of its history to draw much information thence. But, to begin at the days of Abraham; we find that this Father of the Faithful had slaves *: so had Isaac †; and so had Jacob ‡: and so, undoubtedly, had all the Patriarchs; and all this without any imputation of injustice. But lest it should be urged, that this is a mere historical evidence of Fact, I will produce formal testimonies of *Right* from the Mosaic Jurisprudence itself.—Let the Reader turn to Exod. xxi. 2—11. Levit. xxv. 39, 40. Deut. xv. 12. and he will see that it was occasionally permitted to the Jews to make slaves, either by purchase or voluntary subjection, even of their fellow-citizens. With respect to those whom they captured in war, or bought of strangers, there is no limitation, but one, which I shall afterwards mention.

It will be said, perhaps, that though Moses authorized slavery, he did it only as he authorized Divorces, on account of the hard-heartedness of

* See Gen. xii. 26. xiv. 14.

† Gen. xxvi. 14.

‡ Gen. xxxii. 5.

the people he had to legislate for: and this I am ready to allow. He seems rather to have leaned to the side of freedom; from his limiting the servitude of an Hebrew to seven years; and from his frequent recommendation, to treat all Slaves with indulgence and lenity: "Remembering (said he) that yourselves were slaves in Egypt."—He seems to have been particularly mindful of the Fair Sex: for he makes a special law in their favour; which may be seen Deut. xxi. 10—14.—But this law cannot bind a West India planter, who is not obliged to conform to the Mosaical Jurisprudence. It is enough for him, and me who support his cause, that his cause is, in general, supported by a Divine positive law.—But this is not all, there is a formal Divine law, prior to Moses, that regards the African Negroes in particular; and absolutely condemns them to be the veriest of all slaves, to the end of time.

It is well known, from the most ancient of all records, that the African Negroes are the Posterity of *Ham* * (the Father of *Chanaan*). But *Ham* (the Father of *Chanaan*) was condemned, by his father *Noah*, to be, with all his posterity, the *slave of slaves* to his brothers *Japheth* and *Shem*. Now it is allowed, by all interpreters, I think, that

* See Gen. x. 6, and 13.

Noah on this occasion spoke oracularly: that is, he spoke the will of Heaven. If *Heaven*, then, has doomed the posterity of *Ham* to be slaves, what presumption is it not in *Man*, to assert their freedom? I know there are objections that have been made to this Oracle: namely, that "it was made immediately after a fit of drunkenness; and that it regards only one of Ham's sons, the unhappy Chanaan."—But the answer is obvious. For, 1st, The present reading in the Hebrew copies of Genesis * is evidently a corruption: for how could Chanaan, an infant newly born, be singly condemned to slavery for his father's crime? Accordingly we find, from the rules of Hebrew metre, that these words *the Father of* has been lost out of the Text: and that it should run thus; *Cursed be the Father of Chanaan*, &c. And indeed some ancient versions from the original have retained this precious *lection*.—But, secondly, granting the present reading to be genuine, it does not hence follow, that the African Slaves are exempt from the curse. Many of them are certainly the Posterity of Chanaan himself; whose forefathers were expelled from Palestine by the victorious Hebrews: and unless these can be distinguished by some mark of damnation from their fellow Blacks;

* Gen. ix. 25.

it is in vain to attempt to make any distinction in their treatment. Besides, to reason from sure analogy, unless the rest of Ham's children could be shewn to be less deserving of so rigorous a fate than Chanaan, the contrary of which the scripture strongly insinuates, we cannot believe that an inspired Prophet would thunder his anathema upon, apparently, the most innocent of Ham's offspring. It is far more probable, in the supposition still that the vulgar reading is right, that Noah's malediction is to be considered as an argument *à fortiori*; as Logicians call it: as much as to say, "Ham! thou shalt be a *Slave*, with all thy posterity, not excluding the *baby* Chanaan!"

As to Noah's being but just awakened from a state of drunkenness, it is a very lame objection. If his drunkenness had been a voluntary and deliberate fit of debauchery, I allow that it would be something: but it was the consequence of an innocent philosophical experiment, to try the strength of wine; which could not render him less worthy of celestial communications; any more than a simple experiment of the Master of Artillery, to try the force of gun-powder.—At any rate, it is allowed that some sort of inebriation either precedes or accompanies the delivery of most Oracles: are they on that account to be less regarded?—Away with such trifling objections.—

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As certain, then, as it is true, that it is impossible to white-wash the Blackmore's skin; so is it undeniable that he was *ab origine* destined to be a *slave of slaves*!—And we shall, next, see that it is our business to keep him such.

IV. *Slavery agreeable to the Laws of Self-interest.*

WHO, pray, will deny this?—And who, moreover, will affirm, that the Laws of Self-interest are not the strongest of all laws? The Laws of Nature, the Laws of Nations, the Laws of God, are found to be mere cobwebs; compared to the Laws of *Self-interest*. Self-interest is the golden Image of Nebuchadnezzar, before which almost all the children of men fall down, and adore. The decrees, that issue from its mouth, are as irrevocable as those of the Medes and Persians: and I question, whether they are not as implicitly obeyed! Can the advocates for the abolition of slavery point out even three of themselves, who would imitate the conduct of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: and expose themselves to be thrown into a fiery furnace, in disobedience to the laws of *Interest*.

Since, then, the Laws of Interest are by far the strongest of all laws; and since it is manifest, that our Interest requires that the slave trade be not abolished;

lished; it follows of course, that the slave trade ought not to be abolished.—I have next to shew, that,

V. *Slavery is agreeable to the Laws of Luxury.*

I do not pretend to say that the Laws of mere Luxury are as necessary to be observed as those I have hitherto mentioned: but sure I am, that the greater part of the British Nation will join with me in thinking, that they ought not to be readily dissolved. And though this, at first sight, may appear a paradox, I hope soon to establish it on principles that cannot be denied. But first we must define Luxury.

Luxury is the indulgence of gratifications which are not essentially necessary to our existence or health: consequently those gratifications are very many and extensive. At first, indeed, they are few, and easily obtained: but, every indulgence begetting a new desire, they at length become innumerable.—What is worse, they become, in time, almost necessary: so that we cannot conveniently dispense with them.—Such is precisely our case, with respect to the productions of our colonies: we cannot live without *sugar* and *rum*: not to mention other commodities which we import from the West Indies. The question at
issue

issue then is, whether or not six millions of *White British* people, to whom at least rum and sugar have become a sort of necessary Luxury, should, contrary to the Laws of Luxury, sacrifice the use of rum and sugar to the liberty of six thousand *Black* people from the wilds of Africa?—This is the question fairly stated: and if the answer be given in the affirmative, I have nothing more to say on this point; but if it be given in the negative, I need not draw the consequences. They will occur to every intelligent reader.—So I hasten to my last position: namely,

VI. *Slavery is founded on, and agreeable to, the Laws, or rather Maxims, of State-expediency.*

I mean not to say that a State cannot subsist without authorizing and encouraging Slavery: we know a State that has subsisted some years, and is at present in a flourishing condition, where Slavery of all sorts is totally abolished.—I do not even affirm that our own State, otherwise called the British Constitution, might not also subsist, and even flourish, although there were not a slave bought or sold in his Majesty's dominions.—What I affirm is, that in the present system of affairs, and until our Constitution be purified from the dregs that were either yet never full separated

parated from it, or have since the Revolution been gradually blended with it; it is evidently a maxim of State-expediency to support the doctrine of slavery, and to encourage the Slave-trade.

Were it unanimously agreed among our statesmen, that the enemy, while men were asleep, had sown such a quantity of cockle among our political wheat, as to endanger its entire suffocation; then, indeed, it would be necessary to eradicate it, at the risk of grubbing up along with it some particles of the good grain: but as our great overseers are generally of opinion that the field is yet tolerably clean, it would be unwise, say they, to weed it in that condition. The time of harvest is not yet come, so let the cockle be preserved for future fire!

This, our adversaries must allow, is a specious plea; and taking it for granted that it is equally solid (until the contrary be demonstrated), I will here raise on it one of my strongest arguments against the abolition of Slavery.—For, if I can shew that the abolition of Slavery is totally inconsistent with our present System of Government, I shall have certainly shewn that the Laws of State-expediency require the continuance of Slavery.

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That old state-apophthegm, *Lex suprema, Salus Populi*, is grown too obsolete to lay any stress upon it: and that ridiculous *Ekponéma, The Rights of Man!* is too novel to merit the smallest attention. In every polished system, like ours, the salvation of the few, not of the many, is principally to be considered: not the *Rights of Man*, but the Rights of *Kings, Lords, and Commons*, are to be carefully inculcated and hedged round: or, to speak more properly, the authority of the acting Minister is to be, at all events, supported:—What signifies it to him, indeed, whether the influence of the crown be diminished or augmented, if he be the sole manager and director of that Influence?—What signifies it to him, whether there be a disposition in the House of Lords to thwart his measures or not, as long as it is in his power to create a sufficient number of New Members to counteract the design?—What signifies it to him, whether the House of Commons be a representation or a misrepresentation of the People, as long as it is in his power to command a venal Majority of votes?—Above all, to him what signifies it, whether the people at large be happy or unhappy, under-taxed or over-taxed, freemen or slaves, provided he can keep his place without provoking rebellion and resistance? He

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has, indeed, less here to dread than in the preceding cases. The Crown he is sometimes obliged to court over to his purpose; the Lords he is often under the necessity of cajoling into his views; the Commons will now and then be resty: but when the three constitutional Powers, as they are called, coincide in supporting him, he will laugh at the mere People, as long as he can do it with impunity, and without impeachment.—But who will dare to impeach a Minister, or even a Minister's Secretary?—Were their fins red as scarlet, or black as jet, the voice of a venal Majority would make them white as the new-thorn wool, or the driven snow.

The people, it is true, may meet, make resolutions, and pour in petitions: but their meetings will be pointed out as seditious, their resolutions turned into ridicule, and their petitions treated with contempt: a load of lumber lying on the table; as useless as the Speaker's mace appeared in the eyes of Cromwell!—In this disposition of things, nothing but an absolute Revolution can bring about a material change: and where is the *good* subject that would wish for such a Revolution?

Let not this short political digression be considered as a deviation from my present purpose.

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It is, in truth, a necessary prelude, without which the lustre of my future reasoning would be considerably dimmed.

Laying it down then as a political *theorem*, that our present System of Government is a *good* one; I will not say, with some great statesmen, the very *best* that has ever been devised—a system simply good is enough for me—I will, without hesitation, affirm, that we cannot abolish the Slave-trade, but by violating the laws of *State-expediency* in many, very many respects. And,

1st. It is a general Law of State-expediency, according to the present system, that Liberty shall be dealt out in different unequal parcels to the subjects of Great Britain; according to a political balance, of which the original standard is kept at St. James's; but exact models of it sent to Dublin, Quebec, and other places concerned. Now, this distribution of the greatest of all human blessings, is not made in proportion to the good or bad actions of the citizen; but according to his speculative creed! To have the largest *measures* of freedom, in England and Ireland, one must believe the thirty-nine Articles, and adhere to the Form of Church government devised by Parker, and established by Queen Elizabeth. Pass the Tweed, you will find things inverted: you cannot there be a free-man of the forest, un-

less you profess to believe the Shorter Catechism, and adopt the Religious plat-form of Geneva, as remodelled by Knox! Go to Canada, you will have a greater chance of having a principal share in the loaves and fishes, by professing yourself a staunch Romanist. Go to the West Indies, you need be of no Religion at all—provided you are not a *Negro*.—Now to make a retrogressive sort of argumentation; if ever these last (the Negroes) are to be indulged with absolute freedom, see what must be the consequences—Why, the Protestants of Canada will instantly demand the same portion of freedom with their fellow Papists; the Episcopalians of Scotland the same with their fellow Presbyterians; the Presbyterians, and all the other Dissenters of England, the same with their fellow Churchmen; and the Irish Catholics—I tremble to think of it—the same, the very same, with their fellow Protestants! Good God! Mr. Wilberforce! you certainly did not attend to these ruinous consequences, when you first broached or took up the alarming opinion—*That Colonial Slavery ought to be abolished.*

But I must push this argument a little further.—If Slavery and the Slave-trade had been abolished ten years ago, by the unanimous voice of the British Legislature; could that same Legislature have, with any degree of grace or consistency,

tency, since refused to repeal the *Test* and *Corporation* Acts? Could the Legislature have, still more recently, contented themselves with passing a cramped, crazy, and unintelligible bill, in favour of the English Roman Catholics; excluding their peers from one House of Parliament; their Commons from the other; and both from the Army and Navy; for the support of which they have, for many years, contributed double taxes? Could the Legislature, with any shadow of reason, leave sixty thousand citizens of the same religious denomination, and inhabitants of the same island, to groan, at this day, under the whole pressure of unrepealed penal laws; and to be deprived of even a *personal* existence in their native country*?—Could a very great Majority of the Commons of Ireland, in the year 1792, without the most flagrant—I will not say indecorum, but *injustice*, have kicked out of their House an humble petition of nearly three millions of citizens, which only prayed to admit the Petitioners to a very limited and partial *Franchise*, in the election of their own Representatives? or

* Such at present, is the situation of the Scotch Roman Catholics. The whole sanguinary Religious Code is still, for them, a standing law; and there is a special Proviso in both Acts of Parliament for the relief of their English brethren, that *no part of either shall extend to Scotland!*

could the corporation of the city of Dublin, without blushing for shame, have publicly thanked that Majority for their *glorious* exertion in favour of *Protestant Ascendancy*; in a country where Protestants are not one third of the Community? No, gentlemen: if you mean seriously to abolish the *greater* degree of slavery, you must labour first to abolish the *less*: if indeed the shackles that fetter conscience be a *less* tolerable slavery, than those which gall the body: a question, which I leave to be decided by the political Casuists of the age.

I am not, indeed, ignorant, that a subtle distinction has been made (and is now much in vogue among a certain class of would-be-politicians) between *Persecution* and *Disabilitation*. “Religious toleration,” say they, “is equivalent to religious freedom: and no man has a right to complain, that he is excluded from rights or privileges, exclusively annexed to any one System of belief; as long as he is not positively molested for believing a different System; and has it in his power to reclaim those rights or privileges, by adopting the System, to which they are annexed. No particular mode of Faith is worth the contending for; and he must be an egregious fool, who excludes himself from any office or emolument, that his coun-
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“try can bestow, on account of any speculative opinion, he may, however strongly, have imbibed.” Such is the prevalent Doctrine of the day, at White’s, at Boodle’s, and Brooks’s!

I will however be bold to say, that it is one of the purest sophisms, that ever was advanced. For, in the first place, who gave these gentlemen-philosophers power to lay down principles for me? And what if I should think, and be able to prove, that particular Modes of Belief are worth contending for, and contending for even *to the death*? What if I should be able to prove, that if speculative opinions are to exclude men from the rights of citizens, then these pretended philosophers are equally objects of exclusion: for is not the very point, they contend for, a speculative opinion? Indeed, I make little doubt but, that the consciences of such reasoners are as lax, as their arguments are defective: and that, were any mode of Faith to become the established System, they would assent to it with the same indifference they adhere to the present one. But such men *are certainly not come of the seed of those, by whom deliverance was given to Israel* *. Such men would never have fought like a Fairfax, or bled like a Sydney.

* 1 Mac. v. 62.

But "still," say they, "you are tolerated; " and you have no right to complain."—*Tolerated!* The very term is obnoxious, and insolent. Yes, you permit me to breathe, you suffer me to eat, you allow me at length, (what a mercy!) to pray after my own fashion: but you consider and treat me as a bad subject, a worthless citizen, a person not to be trusted, *a knave*, in short, *or a fool**. In strict truth, it is I who *tolerate*, and *tolerate* merely because I cannot help myself: for if I could help myself, and would not, I should merit, at least, one of the gracious epithets, that are so liberally bestowed upon me: I should deserve to be called a Fool.

I must not only *suffer*, according to these gentlemen; I must *suffer* without murmuring; for I have "no right to complain."—No, I have no right to complain, that you prevent me from enjoying privileges, to which my birth, my education, my talents and integrity entitle me; because I go to *Mafs*! I have no right to complain, that I am precluded from representing a numerous class of my fellow-citizens; because I have the misfortune to believe in *Transubstantiation*! I have no

* Such were the decorous epithets bestowed by a Right Rev. Bishop in the Irish house of Lords, on three millions of people, charged with no other crime but that of professing the Romish Religion!

right to complain, that I cannot even have a vote in choosing a *Protestant* to represent me; because I pray to the *Virgin Mary*! I have no right to complain, that I cannot give my son a university education, unless he swear to articles, which neither he nor I believe! I have no right to complain, that neither he, nor any one of six more promising youths, can obtain an Ensigncy in the Army, a Lieutenancy in the Navy, or the smallest place of trust in any department of Government; because the poor lads have been taught, that it was lawful to *pray for their mother's soul*.

Here, ye pretended friends of humanity, are objects worthy of your zeal. Labour to abolish slavery at home, before you think of abolishing it abroad. When the flowing cup of Freedom shall be accessible to the lips of every Briton, alike: when posts, honours, privileges, and public emoluments shall be conferred without regard to any other consideration, than personal merit; or, at least, when no man shall be excluded from them, on any other consideration, than the want of personal merit:—when every active citizen shall have a real and effectual vote in the choice of his Parliamentary Representative; and when any man, properly qualified, whatever be his religious principles, may be chosen that representative:—when the Army, the Navy, the Magistracy, shall be
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equally

equally open to men of all religious denominations:—when Test Oaths shall be no more a criterion of Orthodoxy, and Orthodoxy itself be no more the idolized Dagon of the State—Then, and not till then, will ye be able to bring about the abolition of Colonial Slavery.

Nor is it only with respect to Religious Freedom that my argument holds good. I could bring forward many examples of a merely civil nature; as striking almost as the former. On what principle, for instance, but the lawfulness of slavery in general, could we defend the lawfulness of impressing seamen;—the lawfulness of our game laws;—the lawfulness of exempting one class of men from capture and imprisonment, who have committed the same crimes and delinquencies, for which all others are immured;—the lawfulness of allowing the same class of men to import certain commodities free of duty; for which the people at large are obliged to pay the utmost farthing;—the lawfulness—but I forbear multiplying such instances of oppression; because they are not so universally felt: although they are equally, if not in the same degree, evasive of the *Rights of man*.—On what other principles, I say, could we defend these aberrations from Justice—but on the very principle, on which we support slavery: namely, *State-expediency*.

2. It is another standing law of State-expediency, to increase the Revenue as much as possible; for the purpose of keeping up our great civil list, and clearing off at least a part of our enormous national debt. No matter how that debt has been contracted: no matter how that civil list has been augmented: let their strides be ever so violent, wide, or irregular, Revenue must keep up pace with their strides; money must be found to defray the expences of Government, and to support National Credit.

But it needs no proof, that the abolition of slavery would considerably diminish the Revenue, both directly and indirectly.

Directly, by cutting off the duties on West India imports. For if slavery were abolished, who would cultivate the islands, as the slaves do? Would you have the tender, effeminate, white-skinned Gentlemen of Jamaica dishonour themselves and their native country, by tilling, with their own hands, the filthy soil, in a scorching climate; and earning, like poor Adam, their bread in the sweat of their faces? Degrading idea, which every *generous* Englishman must reprobate.

Directly, again; in as far as the Fortunes which the Planters make, through the hard labour of the Negroes, for the most part ultimately circulate in Britain; whence many advantages accrue to the State.

State.—For, first, it helps to keep up the value of Landed Property; which is a *great* encouragement to Agriculture.—Secondly, it raises the prices of Election-boroughs: which is always a considerable advantage to the Boroughs themselves, and a still greater advantage to the ruling Minister.—I might add, that their riches contribute, not a little to the support of our Watering-places, and to the improvement of our Physicians: for the body of a West India Planter is, commonly, so unnerved with idleness and debauchery, that he rarely is restored to manhood, even after his return.

Indirectly, the Slave-trade is expedient, from the encouragement it gives to our manufactures and commerce. We find in the West Indies a market for commodities, which we could dispose of no where else: The dregs and offals of every commodity are good enough for slaves; and fetch much more than their value. “How,” said a worthy Alderman and Senator, “if the Slave-trade be abolished, could we dispose of our “stinking fish?” Whither, might another say, could we send our coarse woollens, our coarse linens, our coarse cottons, our coarse every thing that is made; the whole rubbish of our warehouses?—What manufacturer can resist the force of this argumentum *ad hominem*?

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What shall I say of the Slave-trade considered as a capital branch of commerce? I could say a great deal; but I will just remark, that it not only gives wealth to a number of merchants, but provides a multitude of hardy sailors, and a multitude of ingenious artists. Our navies are occasionally manned by the former, and ship-building improved by the latter. — With what wonderful ingenuity, indeed, are not slave-transports constructed; and by what a long train of experiments must they not have been brought to their present degree of perfection? If thou hast never seen one, good reader! it is worth the while to go to Liverpool for the purpose. Those portable prisons are so contrived, that four hundred men and women can be more easily stowed in one of them, than could be the same number of dogs or hogs! — but remember, that they are *black* men and women.

To sum up now, in a few words, the whole of my reasoning — Slavery, in the present system of things, cannot be abolished, but in opposition to the Laws of *State-expediency*, in opposition to the Laws of British *Luxury*, in opposition to the Laws of *Self-interest*; without having, on the other hand, either the Law of *Nations*, the Law of *Nature*, or the Law of *God*, to justify and support this opposition. Therefore the abolition of Slavery is,
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in the present system of things, neither practicable nor necessary. Q. E. D.

It is in vain, after this, to talk to us of the various calamities, hardships, and afflictions, which the slaves are obliged to undergo. It is in vain to paint, in the most glowing colours, the dreadful series of unabating misery that attends them, in all its shapes, from the moment they become our property, until they become the property of worms. In vain has evidence on evidence been produced to ascertain the cruel barbarities that are practised on them by their unfeeling masters. In vain have their bleeding wounds, and mangled limbs, and ulcered legs, been exposed to public commiseration. In vain has the muse of Cowper sung their melting laments; in vain the pen of Clarkson described their despair.—*British Interest*, *British Luxury*, *British State-expediency*, have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, their despair or their lamentations.

Ye Foxes and Wyndhams, ye Smiths and Wilberforces! give up, give up your vain pursuit. Our brave Tarleton and his associates *must* gain the day. What though the Minister lend you his single voice? What though he lend it you seriously? The voice of the Minister will, on this occasion, be drowned by the voice of Ministerialists; and your opposition here will be as ineffectual

effectual with him on your side, as it is every where else when he is against you.

Let me once more advise you, gentlemen, to turn your thoughts another way; and to strain every nerve to accomplish a Reform at home, before you attempt to carry it abroad. Get the penal laws and disabilities that regard Religion swept entirely away—Get all State Oaths and Tests reduced to one simple Oath of constitutional Allegiance—Procure that every innocent subject be entitled to the same protection, and, according to his rank and capacity, to the same *privileges*—if the term itself be consistent with pure Liberty.—Above all, unite your abilities and your interests to get a free and equal representation of the people—And when ye shall have done all this—there is great probability that ye may be able to obtain an abolition of Slavery.

THE END.

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ARGUMENT FOR SLAVERY.

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